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Oswald's body to be exhumed

Widow to allow tests for identity

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Medical specialists from throughout the country are being invited to participate in the exhumation Friday of the body of Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy, to determine through an autopsy if it is indeed Oswald's body, sources said today.

Oswald was buried in Rose Hill Cemetery in Fort Worth on Nov. 25, 1963, after he was shot to death by nightclub owner Jack Ruby in the basement of the Dallas police station.

Oswald's exhumation, which has been discussed for more than a year, has been made possible now because of a consent agreement, signed by Oswald's widow, Marina Oswald Porter, who now lives in Rockwall, source said.

British lawyer and author Michael Eddowes, who has spent 16 years investigating the slaying of Oswald, has been calling for the exhumation because he believes that a Soviet agent disguised to look like Oswald was the assassin, not Oswald, and that it is the Soviet agent in Oswald's tomb.

Investigators have generally discounted his theory.

Mrs. Porter could not be reached for comment today. Oswald's mother, Marguerite Oswald, contacted at her home in Fort Worth, refused to comment.

Sources, however, say Dallas County Medical Examiner Charles Petty agreed this week to exhume the body, after Mrs. Porter consented.

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United Press International reported today it had learned last week of the planned exhumation and had gotten confirmation from Mrs. Porter that she had signed a consent order.

"It's true," UPI quoted Mrs. Porter as saying. "Who told you?"

Disinterring the body would make possible an examination of specific physical characteristics. Those which have come into question are Oswald's height, his dental work and a missing bone in his ear from a childhood mastoidectomy.

Eddowes had tried unsuccessfully through the courts in Tarrant County to force exhumation, but it was denied by an appeals court in May.

The court ruled that there was no medical or legal reason to exhume the body — just speculation. Petty had been reluctant to order the exhumation last year because of possible legal problems. Without strong legal or medical reason, the widow or mother of Oswald could possibly sue the county, he said.

It is Eddowes' contention that a Soviet intelligence officer switched identities with Oswald after Oswald arrived in the Soviet Union on Oct. 15, 1959. He claims that the agent returned to the United States in 1962 and that the real Oswald "disappeared" in Russia.

Eddowes filed suit in District Court at Fort Worth last year seeking an exhumation. But the court ruled against him because he is a British citizen and did not have proper standing in the case. On May 15, the Fort Worth Court of Civil Appeals upheld the lower court ruling, and that case is now before the Texas Supreme Court.

UPI said it learned last week of secret plans to disinter the body in the Oswald grave. But, the wire service said, because participants in the plan expressed fears that publicity might force cancellation of the exhumation, UPI elected not to report the matter.